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TOHAK 121

been in operation for some time. The agreement might then be abrogated and fuel rods within the reactor appropriated. However the plutonium in these could be turned into a weapon only after a delay to allow the radioactivity to decay, and after the chemical separation facilities had been built, and after a nuclear weapon had been designed and fabricated—all of which might take years. Such abrogation would be very provocative, immediately obvious to the world, and almost certainly halt the supply of additional fuel needed to keep the reactor operating.

The recent Indian nuclear explosion, using material manufactured in a Canadian reactor, should not be taken to mean that safeguards against the acquiring of nuclear weapons are impractical. The Canadians supplied their natural uranium-fueled reactor to the Indians under the condition it would be used only for peaceful, not military, purposes, and that any nuclear explosive would fall under this prohibition. The Indians refused to acknowledge this interpretation and evaded this stipulation by describing their nuclear explosion as "peaceful." There is no difference between a "peaceful" and a military explosive, but since the Indians have long since been using native, not Canadian, uranium, the Canadians had no way of stopping this prostitution of their aid. The precedent points up the desirability of including in the original agreements with Egypt and Israel a commitment not to use their reactor for nuclear explosives of *any* kind. There are recent reports that Iran is getting nuclear aid from France—as a step toward acquiring nuclear weapons. If so, and the example is copied elsewhere in the Middle East, it would be disastrous.

As a condition for nuclear cooperation, the US should also ask that Egypt and Israel become parties to the Nonproliferation Treaty. If ratification of the NPT is politically impossible at this time, both countries should at least agree to put all their nuclear materials under international safeguards and reaffirm that they will not introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East. By dealing with this issue simultaneously with both countries, we should be able to overcome the reluctance of either to move without the other. If all these conditions are accepted, the cooperative programs could reduce rather than increase the risk that nuclear weapons will enter the Middle East. Other nations that might become a source of nuclear assistance to Egypt and Israel would probably not insist on safeguarding procedures as effective as the United States is now in a position to seek. The current agreements are thus an opportunity for the US to reinforce the policy of halting the spread of nuclear weapons. It should not be lost.

Herbert Scoville, Jr.

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The Nixon Watch

Kissinger's Threat

Brussels

President Nixon, Gen. Alexander Haig, Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, Maj. Gen. Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger, the principal State Department assistant who accompanied Henry Kissinger on the Nixon trip to Salzburg and the Middle East, were told repeatedly by the Secretary of State during the weekend preceding his June 11 Salzburg press conference, and with bitter, unmistakable emphasis on the night and morning preceding it, that he was determined to resign if reports and commentaries that seemed to him to impugn what he called his "public honor" did not cease, and if the Senate Foreign Relations Committee did not reaffirm its previously stated confidence in him and in his integrity. Kissinger's display of hurt, anger and emotion in Salzburg was widely described as "a tantrum." It was that in a narrow and literal sense, but it was not the tantrum of Kissinger alone. It reflected and it may have understated the frustration, fear, anger and emotion that at least two White House assistants, Haig and Ziegler, shared with Kissinger and encouraged him to vent in public.

The main purpose of this report is to tell that story rather than to rehash the [illegible] and merits of Kissinger's role in the wiretaps that were put upon four journalists and 13 officials, including several of his own National Security Council assistants, between 1969 and 1971, and his role in the broader surveillance operation conducted by the infamous White House "plumbers." Lest I be thought to evade those belabored issues, however, I'll state my reading of the record to date and be done with it.

My judgment is that Kissinger has been obscuring and unduly minimizing his role in the wiretaps and his knowledge of the plumbers operation ever since the rumors about his involvement began to plague him last year. He would have better served himself and the country if in the interest of candor he had overstated his wiretap role and admitted to more knowledge than he probably had of the shoddy activities of his sometime assistant, David Young, in the plumbers business. But nothing in the known record proves or, when appraised calmly and in the whole, substantially suggests that Henry Kissinger has perjured himself or disqualified himself. The very worst of the believable allegations are puny junk when measured against his achievements. The fact they have been taken as seriously as they have been is one of many indicators of the sickling times.

The story told here begins with Kissinger's press conference in Washington on June 6. The Secretary was tired after 33 continuous and wearing days in the

Middle East. He was proud of what he had accomplished and he expected to be queried with intelligence and respect, in a context of implied though not necessarily explicit acclaim. Kissinger said in Salzburg that he expected and was prepared only for questions about Middle Eastern, European and Soviet diplomacy. If this statement was literally true, and I doubt that it was, it was a serious reflection upon his State Department press advisers, Robert McCloskey and Robert Anderson. Leaked, adverse reports about his wiretap and plumbers roles had been appearing during his absence and were getting sharper when he returned. If he was not told to expect questions on these subjects, he was poorly served. What he had some right to be surprised at was the sheer viciousness of one question and the brutality of a series of other questions.

Kissinger had the misfortune to encounter Peter Peckarsky, aged 27, who represents himself to be the Washington correspondent of *The Tech*, a publication that according to Peckarsky appears twice a week and has a circulation of about 8000, principally on and around the Boston campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Peckarsky has applied for congressional and White House press credentials and holds temporary credentials, pending a determination that he is entitled to permanent accreditation. He turned up in the White House press room last April and in my intensely biased opinion has identified himself with some of his questions there as one of those characters who mistake their press cards for licenses to abuse, indict and malign public officials who do not enjoy their approval. Peckarsky remarked in a recent question at the White House that James St. Clair, the President's chief Watergate lawyer, is handling the case as if he were defending "a common, ordinary criminal." This is the sort of observation that any journalist has a right to make in print or on the air, in his own name, but not on the privileged but anonymous record of a briefing where the objective should be, but all too often is not, to elicit usable information.

Although many of my colleagues will think me stuffy and reactionary for saying so, I argue that such reporters as Peckarsky and Clark Mollenhoff, the veteran and distinguished brutalitarian who also shook Kissinger at the June 6 press conference, really ought to go back to school for cram courses in journalism, courtesy and the civil rights of other people. At the close of long and complex questions—these journalistic prosecutors tend to long questions—Peckarsky asked Kissinger "whether or not you have consulted and retained counsel in preparation for a defense against a possible perjury indictment?" It was a disgraceful question, not justified by the nominally but not actually contradictory quotations that were cited in the preliminaries to the question, or by anything else in the Kissinger record.

Mollenhoff followed with four bellowed demands that Kissinger acknowledge that he had recommended the wiretaps of his former NSC assistants, a query that was remotely relevant only because Kissinger in his obscuratory folly had obscured but not wholly denied the fact that he did. Kissinger, audibly and visibly disturbed, said that "I did not make a direct recommendation." Having been told by Kissinger and having reported months ago in this journal that the direct recommendations for wiretaps were made by Gen. Haig for Kissinger, I was unable to regard this as a major journalistic triumph.

James Kilpatrick, a columnist, encountered Kissinger at a White House dinner that night and found him fuming and resentful at the treatment he had received at the press conference. At the State Department the next day he was still brooding about it but seemed to his associates to have calmed down. On Saturday morning, June 8, Kissinger taped a television interview with Howard K. Smith and Ted Koppel of ABC. Kissinger understood that about five minutes of the 30-minute interview were to be broadcast the following Friday while he was in the Middle East with the President. He and his press advisers correctly assumed that one passage in the interview was certain to be broadcast. In that passage Kissinger referred in public for the first time to the possibility that he might resign. In a clear though oblique reference to Watergate and its effect upon the conduct of foreign policy, Koppel asked Kissinger: "If you ever felt that foreign policy was being manipulated for the sake of domestic political reasons, what would you do?" Kissinger answered, "I would resign and I would say so publicly," meaning that he would publicly state his reason for resigning. The statement surprised and disturbed some people at the State Department, partly because it was the clearest indication to date that the Watergate situation troubled Kissinger more than he had previously acknowledged, and partly because what amounted to a threat of resignation and the expression of a fear that President Nixon was capable of misusing foreign affairs in a way that Kissinger would not tolerate, was likely to make worldwide news and detract from the President's anticipated triumph in the Middle East. Kissinger himself seemed to his associates to be reasonably calm, however, and the impression at the department was that he had largely recovered from the shock of his press conference.

It was a short-lived impression. Anthony Lake and Morton Halperin, two former Kissinger assistants who had been wiretapped, have filed civil suits that, if pursued, would help to keep the issue in the news for months or years. Bob Woodward, one of the *Washington Post* reporters who had made Watergate a national story, told State Department press officers that he and his partner, Carl Bernstein, were going to do the definitive Kissinger wiretap story and asked for

the texts of everything that Kissinger had said on the subject. Kissinger heard that Philip Geyelin, a *Washington Post* editor, was saying around town that the *Post* was going to stay with and play up the Kissinger wiretap-plumbers affair and make it a second Watergate sensation. The Sunday *Post* headed its lead editorial "What About Kissinger?" and said it was the duty of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to recall Kissinger and "do its best to determine whether he spoke the truth." The Sunday *New York Times* reported in a front-page story that Gen. Haig, then Kissinger's deputy at the White House, ordered the FBI to end the wiretaps in question in February of 1971. If true this report and the information on which it was said to be based contradicted Kissinger's sworn testimony last September that he and his office had only indirect contact with the wiretap operation after May of 1970 and had no direct hand in terminating it.

The point that most interests me is that the impact of all this upon Kissinger did not differ greatly from the impact upon some of these officials, notably Gen. Haig and Ronald Ziegler. Kissinger said with mounting agitation that these things could not be happening by coincidence. There had to be "a campaign" against him and there had to be somebody or somebodies directing the campaign. Haig and Ziegler agreed with him. Haig, who is generally considered to be one of the President's calmer and more thoughtful assistants, was especially insistent that a campaign against Kissinger and through him against the President was developing and that something had to be done about it. For a while before the departure for Salzburg, cooler types at State thought Kissinger had been persuaded either to settle for a statement setting forth his version of the disputed events or, preferably, to let the whole thing rest easy while he was in the Middle East with the President and see how matters stood when Mr. Nixon and he returned to Washington. As Kissinger related in Salzburg, he telephoned Sen. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the Sunday before leaving Washington. Kissinger said that he was going to resign if the reports impugning his truthfulness and honor didn't cease and prepared Fulbright for a letter asking the committee to review the record and say publicly that Kissinger did or didn't have its full confidence. Fulbright perceived that Kissinger was very upset and thought it possible that he was saying things that he didn't really mean and might regret later. But the chairman agreed, rather sorrowfully, to initiate the inquiry and proceed to the public hearing that Kissinger said he wanted.

In news reports and commentaries that followed the Salzburg press conference, much was made of the indication that Kissinger had not told either the President or the assistants with whom he conferred that he was going to say at the press conference that he intended to resign if the critical stories did not cease and some appropriate body did not clear him of suspicion. It appears to be true that he didn't forewarn Haig, Ziegler and others that he was going to say this publicly. But he had said it in private to them, over and over. Whether Kissinger said it beforehand and explicitly to the President is unclear. The most that Kissinger would say about this at the press conference was that "I told the President that I should give you a public accounting and he agreed and we had no further discussion of the matter." It is certain that he had conveyed the message through others. Haig had told the President beforehand that Kissinger was saying that he would resign if the allegations continued and he wasn't cleared. It follows that the President knew what Kissinger had in mind when he authorized his Secretary of State to hold the press conference.

A theory developed afterward that Kissinger in his emotion went farther than he'd intended. According to this theory he had intended to content himself with saying no more than that he couldn't conduct foreign policy effectively if he remained under the sort of cloud that seemed to him to be gathering over him. The record does not support the theory. At the Salzburg conference, at a later one the same day across the border in Germany and at a still later one in Jerusalem, Kissinger was given repeated opportunities to say he had overspoken himself and to draw back from the threat to resign. In every instance he stuck by what he had said.

An impression that the President was surprised and displeased arose in part from a statement that Ziegler issued on Mr. Nixon's behalf. It said that "the President recognizes Secretary Kissinger's desire to defend his honor" and that "the Secretary's honor needs no defense." This could be read to mean that Kissinger had done something that he didn't need to do and had thereby annoyed the President. I deduce from what I've been told that a more interesting explanation lies behind the statement. The President is said to have received the news very calmly indeed when Haig and Ziegler told him that Kissinger had threatened to resign. Already aware that Kissinger had been saying in private what he had now said in public, the President had made up his mind that he would never accept Kissinger's resignation in the current circumstances. Whether Kissinger knew this when he made the threat is something that I'd like to know and don't know. However that may be, a simple and straightforward endorsement of what Kissinger had said at the Salzburg press conference would have committed Mr. Nixon to accept the resignation when and if it was offered. In order to avoid this unlikely and unwanted prospect, the President resorted to cryptic ambiguity.

John Osborne